THE UNITY AND SUPREMACY OF GOD THE FATHER.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED

IN THE

SECOND INDEPENDENT CHURCH,

IN

CHARLESTON, S. C.

APRIL 22, 1826.

BY

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TO THE

REV. SAMUEL GILMAN,

Pastor of the Second Independent Church,

IN CHARLESTON,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS

CHRISTIAN BROTHER

AND FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author of the following discourse, having been invited by the House of Representatives of South Carolina to deliver a discourse before that body during their session in December last, complied with the request, and preached a sermon on the doctrine of the Unity of God. A reply was given to that sermon on the ensuing Sabbath, before the same body, by the Rev. Mr. Durbin, Professor in a college recently established in Augusta, Kentucky, in which the Rev. Gentleman endeavoured to prove the great antiquity of the trinitarian hypothesis, and to establish what is called 'the doctrine of the two natures of Christ.' The Legislature adjourning the next day, no opportunity was then offered to answer his arguments, and Professor Durbin having preached the sermon containing his reply in other places, and finally in Charleston, and it having been printed, the following discourse was delivered as an answer to his most prominent arguments. In complying with the request of the Charleston Unitarian Book Society to furnish a copy of it for the Press, the Author felt much reluctance, owing to his youth, but the urgent solicitation of his friends having relieved him from the charge of presumption, and they having taken, as he conceives, in a great measure, the responsibility of its reputation upon themselves, he submits it to the candor of the public, hoping that it may do some good; at the same time, in order to prevent mistake, and relieve Unitarians from all apprehension, he begs it may be distinctly understood, that the sentiments contained in it are his own, and that he is not 'the representative of their opinions,' as he holds himself accountable to no man, or body of men, for the principles of his religious faith.

Augusta, Georgia, May 1826.

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SERMON.

EXODUS XX. 3.

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

When we consider the reasonableness of the Christian religion; the strong and unanswerable arguments by which its divine authority is established, and the importance of such a system of morality and revealed truth to the welfare of society and the happiness of man, it is a matter not only of surprise, but of painful reflection, that with all its commanding claims, and all the advantages necessarily attendant on the belief of its doctrines, and the practice of its precepts among men, it has not yet been so fortunate as to obtain a general prevalence; but that, in many Christian countries, not a few are to be found who not only disregard its injunctions, but even doubt of its utility, and call in question its authority as a revelation from heaven. It was to have been confidently expected, that a religion, so charitable in its nature, and so happily adapted to improve the condition of society, and elevate the character of man, would have made its way directly to the hearts of all, and gained its victories, and secured its triumphs without serious opposition. But, alas, the case has been far otherwise. Christianity had scarcely commenced its progress when it was violently assailed, and not only the corrupt passions of the human breast, but even genius and learning arrayed themselves against it. Although the evidences of its truth, and its claims to a divine origin rested on a basis too firm to be shaken by the most formidable human efforts, yet the disposition to undermine, and,

if possible, to destroy the whole system together with the institutions to which it has given birth, has never been wanting, but has shewn itself daringly conspicuous in every age, from the era of its first promulgation down to the present time.

In different periods the modes of attack have, it is true, been varied, but the same fixed and malignant determination to effect the overthrow of the religion itself has never been abandoned. Scarcely a quarter of a century has elapsed since a violent effort was made in France to abolish ecclesiastical orders and establishments, the Sabbath, public worship, and all those institutions of good order by which the interests of Christianity have been perpetuated, and its benefits extended to the human family :—And, however humiliating the fact may be, we cannot look abroad upon the religious state of society, in our own country, without acknowledging that infidelity has its advocates among us, and that there are many in the different classes of society influenced by various motives, who are ready to flock to its standard, and to become the disseminators of deistical principles. The works of the celebrated infidel philosophers of England and France, and of their disciples in this country, are still read, and although less industriously circulated than formerly, not unfrequently fall in the way of the young and inexperienced, recommend themselves by the fascination of their style, and the ingenuity of their arguments, and, if they do not, by their artful sophistry, completely unhinge the mind, and lead to a total rejection of Revelation, yet they do a serious injury, by exciting doubt, and encouraging a spirit of sceptical speculation.

Is it, however, to writers of this description that we are, solely, to attribute the extensive evil of which we complain ? Are there not other causes of infidelity more deeply seated, and which exercise a more pernicious influence than these ? We think there are. We are persuaded that there are many infidels in society who never made themselves acquainted with the writings of Hume and Herbert, Bolingbroke

and Paine, and other writers of that class, and who are not only incapable themselves of making a systematic attack upon Christianity, but even of understanding the arguments of those who make such attacks. None, we are sure, were ever made infidels in consequence of a critical examination of the evidences upon which our religion rests for support; but it will invariably be found that it has been only a superficial and imperfect examination which has led to such a result.

What then are the principal causes which have led men, in every age, to deny the utility, and to call in question the divine authority of the Christian revelation? We answer; that the false and mistaken opinions which men have entertained respecting the doctrines which the Christian religion teaches, and more especially concerning that great and fundamental article of our faith, the unity of God, are among the principal, if they are not the only causes of the scepticism and infidelity which have prevailed in the world since its first promulgation.

It is our object, at present, to inquire, whether the Christian religion has actually abandoned the doctrine of the divine unity, or at least transformed it into that repulsive shape, and arrayed it in those mysterious disguises, which have so long exposed its own authority, as a divine revelation, to the attacks of Deists, the cavils of sceptics, and the ridicule of infidels?—Or, whether, on the other hand, it has not asserted that consoling and important truth in the strongest terms, and placed it on a foundation broad as the throne of God, and stable as the everlasting mountains, and caused it to beam forth from every page with a clearness, a beauty, and a glory, that are calculated to dispel all doubt, and calm all fearful apprehension? Nor do we believe that, in this enlightened age, and in this free and tolerant country, such inquiries can be dangerous, unimportant, or uninteresting.—We feel impelled, indeed, by a sense of duty—of duty whose claims are urgent, powerful and irresistible, to express ourselves decidedly and without reserve; for we perceive, with

pain, the extensive prevalence of what we consider injurious error as regards this great doctrine of the divine unity, and it is our desire, in this Southern section of our happy land, where the spirit of liberty and free inquiry prevails, that this error should be discovered and renounced; that Christianity, our holy religion, should rest on its proper basis; that all its doctrines should be clearly understood, and cordially embraced, and its sacred institutions, in their true spirit, be universally upheld and revered.

What is the particular error, touching the doctrine of the divine unity, to which we allude? It is this:—While all believers in Christianity profess to believe and maintain that doctrine, there are many who, in our opinion, hold to another, utterly inconsistent with this profession—the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is on this point that Unitarians differ most widely from other denominations of Christians; and it is because they think they have the most powerful reasons for this difference of opinion, that they employ their Christian liberty in asserting and maintaining a contrary doctrine. It is on the strength of this one point that they assert the existence in the Christian world, of what they cannot but consider a pernicious error—an error fatal to the beauty and consistency of the Christian system; and now, in the spirit of Christian charity, feeling an affectionate interest in their welfare, we would call all serious and reflecting persons around us, and with the Holy Bible in our hands, and imploring the illuminating influence of the good spirit of our heavenly Father, we would frame a few plain arguments, and put to them, and earnestly entreat them to put to themselves, a few interesting and weighty questions, and to answer them candidly, deliberately, and without reserve, before God and their own consciences.

In the very outset, then, of the inquiry, we feel disposed to make a solemn appeal to them all, and to ask, how it has happened that this doctrine,—the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, has ever been called in question?

Why has it not obtained a universal acquiescence among Christians? If it had been expressly and unequivocally declared in the sacred Scriptures, would it ever have been, for a moment, a subject of dispute? Would any man, professing himself a Christian, have dared deny it? Has it not been, ever since the early part of the fourth century, a subject of keen controversy? Have not men of equal intelligence, piety and virtue, differed widely in their opinion respecting it? But have not *all*, without exception, admitted, in some shape or other, the Unity of God? What are we to do with these stubborn facts? Do they not incontestably prove, that the truth of the former doctrine is, at least, doubtful? Had it been in the power of Trinitarians to refer us to a single passage in the Bible, declaring it in terms not to be misunderstood, would they not have done so long ago, and ended the controversy? As they have not done this, when there was every motive in the world to induce them, what does their negligence prove? Does it not plainly evince, that it was quite out of their power to do it? We call upon them, but in vain, to adduce a single passage from the Scriptures which affirms, in positive language, that Jesus Christ is the supreme God. We have examined and re-examined the Scriptures from beginning to end, and we find in them no affirmation of the kind. We believe, therefore, that there is no such doctrine contained in the sacred volume. We believe that the doctrine is highly improbable in itself, and not only so, but utterly inconsistent with other doctrines of Scripture, about which there is no dispute, and cannot be any. We do not wish to give up a doctrine that is certainly revealed for one that is not merely doubtful, but is embarrassed with great difficulties, and involved in perplexing mystery. We do not wish to give up a positive declaration of Almighty God, on which our present, and it may be, our future happiness is suspended, for any obscure and improbable deductions of the human understanding.

If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, be the supreme God of the Universe, we all ought to knowit. If he be the infinite

God, the eternal omniscient Jehovah, we all ought to believe in him, to obey him, and to adore him, as such. If there be such a doctrine revealed, it is not a matter of indifference whether we believe it, or disbelieve it. It is a matter of the highest possible moment, that we should embrace it, and embrace it cordially, and without hesitation. If, on the contrary, there be no such doctrine revealed, it is equally our duty to reject it. To believe a being to be the supreme God, who is not so, and to obey and worship a being as the supreme God, who is not so, are errors of no small magnitude in faith and practice.

We do affirm, and shall now proceed to prove, that Jesus Christ is not the supreme God. We shall draw our proof from no human authority, but from the expressed declarations of divine revelation.

I. In the first place, we shall prove, that there is one only living and true God, who, in the sacred Scriptures, is called the Father.

II. That Jesus Christ is a distinct being from God, the Father.

III. That Jesus Christ is an inferior being to God, the Father.

IV. We shall then proceed to answer the objections to the Unitarian views of the subject.

First,—We are to prove, that there is one, and only one, supreme God, the Father.

To substantiate this point, we adduce the following passages from the Scriptures : Our text, Ex. xx. 3. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord. Mal. ii. 10. Hath not one God created us ? Mark xii. 29. The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord. John iv. 23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father. Matt. vi. 6.—When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father. Matt. xi. 25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord

of Heaven and earth. 1 Cor. viii. 6. To us, there is *but* one God, the Father, of whom are all things. Eph. iv. 6. One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all. 1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 20. God is one.

The passages of Scripture, here quoted, plainly prove, that there is one only, supreme God, the Father. Is it possible to state a doctrine in stronger language than that which is here used ? If you wished to affirm the fact, that there is one only, supreme God, the Father, how could you do it more emphatically, and conclusively, than in the very words of Jesus himself, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth?"—or than in the language of St. Paul, "To us, there is *but* one God, the Father, of whom are all things?" "There is one God, and Father of all, who is above all ?" Here is no ambiguity, no circumlocution. Here is no metaphor, no far-fetched allegory, no mysterious combination of scholastic terms to bewilder the unsophisticated mind. Here is no latent, nor obscure meaning for logicians to detect, and explain to the admiration of the inquisitive and the curious. There is not, we should suppose, even a possibility of mistaking the intention of the sacred writers in these positive assertions. It is as intelligible to the ignorant as to the wise and learned, and calls in no aid from any quarter to make it the better or the more generally understood.

Take away from us the Holy Scriptures—deprive us of the writings of the Prophets, the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the messengers of God's will—convince us that the declarations of Jesus Christ are deserving of no respect whatever, that the pretensions of Mahomet are as good as his—that the Vedant of the Hindoos has as high an authority as the New Testament of Christians—that the ancients were right in deifying trees and rivers, and in raising altars to the human species ;—convince us of this, and it would be a matter of perfect indifference, under such circumstances, whether men believed in three Gods, or in thirty ;—but with the Scrip-

tures in our hands, believing them to be inspired writings, and enjoying the free and perfect use of our rational faculties, if we open these sacred Scriptures, and find it there unequivocally declared, that there is but one God, the Father —if we find that this glorious Being, descending in majesty from heaven, has authoritatively declared, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me;"—if we find that all the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists expressly declare, and maintain the strict unity and unrivalled supremacy of God, the Father, acknowledging no other God but him; if we find that Jesus Christ, the last messenger of the divine will to mankind, who received a higher commission, and more exalted powers from God, than any other being, has confirmed the statements of all these previously inspired Prophets—declared the doctrine to be the first of all doctrines, and stated it plainly and explicitly, in words not to be misunderstood; if we find all these to be facts, and facts the evidence of which we cannot possibly resist—we must believe, not that there are three Gods, or thirty Gods, but that there is one God, and only one God, the Father, who "will not give his glory to another"—a being, whose nature is unmixed and pure, whose unity is undivided and indivisible, and who partakes with no other being, however exalted he may be, the prerogatives of universal sway;—and if we deny this doctrine, notwithstanding all this mass of evidence to the contrary, or, if we do not deny it, but yet hold to other doctrines that are utterly inconsistent with it, we do so at our peril, we must take the consequence of our presumption.

If, therefore, there is one, and only one supreme God, the Father, Jesus Christ cannot be the supreme God; for, if he were, there would be more than one supreme God; there would be two supreme Gods, Jesus Christ, and the Father; but this cannot be the case, if the Scriptures, which assert the contrary, be true.

Secondly.—We were to prove, that Jesus Christ is a being distinct from God, the Father.

This is proved by the following passages: John v. 30. I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. John xvii. 3. That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John xx. 17. Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. 2 Peter i. 2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus, our Lord. 2 Peter i. 17. He, (i. e. Jesus) received from God, the Father, honour and glory. 2 John 3.— Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God, the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. vi. 23. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. ii. 16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, &c. Rev. i. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him.

It is unnecessary to multiply texts. These are sufficient for our purpose. Beings, who possess separate wills, cannot be one and the same being. They must be separate and distinct beings. The being who sends, cannot be the being sent. The being ascending to another being, cannot be that other being to whom he ascends. The being who receives honour from another, cannot be that other who confers the honour. The Son, cannot be that Father whose Son he is. All this is undeniable and will not be disputed. As Christ, therefore, is said to possess a separate will from the Father, to be sent *by* the Father, to ascend *to* the Father, to receive glory *from* the Father, to stand in the relation of a *Son* to the Father, it is impossible that he should be the Father himself, but he must be a being distinct and separate *from* the Father.

Thirdly.— We are to prove, that Jesus Christ is a being inferior to God, the Father.

We shall adduce, in support of this proposition, six different classes of texts.

The first class of texts are those in which "Christ is expressly said to be inferior to the Father, and that all his power has been given him by the Father, and that he could

do nothing without the Father." John xiv. 26. My Father is greater than I. 1 Cor. iii. 23. Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. 1 Cor. xi. 3. The head of Christ is God. John v. 19. Verily, verily, I say unto you the Son can do nothing of himself. John iv. 10. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Acts x. 38. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Heb. i. 9. God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

The second class of texts are those from which it appears that the knowledge and power of Christ were limited in regard to certain events. There are two texts of this kind in which the language used is very striking. Matt. xx. 23.—To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. Mark xiii. 32. But of that day and of that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Third class: Texts from which it appears that the authority of Christ in his church is subordinate to that of the Father, from whom it was originally derived. These texts are to be found in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-ninth verse. Then cometh the end, when he, (i. e. Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

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* Upon the supposition that Jesus Christ is actually God, equal to the Father, we may be justified in substituting the word *God* wherever

Fourth class: Those texts which affirm that Christ prayed to the Father, manifested resignation to the divine will, and was strengthened by an angel. Matt. xi. 25, 26. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth—even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Mark vi. 46. And when he had sent them

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the pronoun occurs in reference to Christ in this passage. Let us do this, and then ask ourselves whether such a supposition can be admitted for a moment, while this striking passage continues to make a part of the sacred volume.

Then cometh the end, when God shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when God shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For God must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For God hath put all things under God's feet. But when God saith all things are put under God's feet, it is manifest that God is excepted which did put all things under God. And when all things shall be subdued unto God, then shall the Son also himself (i. e. God) be subject to God that put all things under God, that God may be all in all!

Is there not a degree of inferiority asserted here utterly inconsistent with the idea that Jesus Christ is the Supreme God? God delivering up the kingdom to God! God putting all things under God's feet! God subject to God! Can we dare even to imagine such things? And if we cannot, how can we presume to affirm that Christ is in deed and in truth equal to the infinite God?

Substituting now the word *Christ* wherever the pronoun occurs, referring to him, we shall discover, we believe, the true intention of the writer, without being forced to draw inferences calculated to shock our feelings, and confound all our conceptions of things. It will then read as follows:

Then cometh the end, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when Christ shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For Christ must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For God hath put all things under Christ's feet. But when God saith all things are put under Christ's feet, it is manifest that God is excepted which did put all things under Christ. And when all things shall be subdued unto Christ, then shall the Son also himself, (i. e. Christ) be subject unto God that put all things under Christ, that God may be all in all.

away, he departed into a mountain to pray. The scene of his agony in the garden is described in nearly the same language by the different Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, except that the last adds the circumstance of the angel appearing to Christ strengthening him. In Luke xxii. 41, the account given of this affecting scene is as follows:—And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, If thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, (mark! here are two wills,) but thine be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him. See also Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 53. Mark xiv. 36. John xii. 27, 28; xiv. 16; xvi. 26; xvii. 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25; from which passages it plainly appears that it was the habit of our Saviour to offer up prayer and thanksgiving to God, and to supplicate assistance from him.

Fifth class: Texts in which Christ is either expressly called a man, or is spoken of as possessing the nature of a man. Acts ii. 22. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Heb. ii. 17. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren. John xx. 17. Go to my brethren and say unto them, &c. Heb. ii. 10. It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. 1 Cor. xv. 21. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Sixth class: Texts from which it appears that the dignity and honour with which Christ is now invested in heaven, are imparted to him by Almighty God, and that these distinguishing tokens of the Divine favour are to be considered as the reward of his fidelity and obedience unto death. Phil. ii. 8, 9. And being in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the

cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. Heb. ii. 9. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. Heb xii. 2. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

From these six classes of texts, it appears, incontestably, that Jesus Christ is inferior to God, the Father.

He who declares that the Father is greater than himself, that all his power has been given him by the Father, that he can do nothing without the Father—that the words which he speaks, he speaks not of himself, but by the commandment of the Father—He, who acknowledges that he is ignorant of a certain event, and is therefore not omniscient as God, the Father, is—He who acknowledges that it is out of his power to accomplish a certain object, and is, therefore, not omnipotent as God, the Father, is—He who prays to the Father—has a separate will from the Father—He, who is strengthened by an angel—He, who derives his dominion from the Father, delivers up his kingdom to the Father, and is subject to the Father—He, who is said to have *been made, in all things*, like his brethren of the human family, and was, therefore, a *created* being—He, who is called the beginning of the *creation of God*, the first-born of every *creature*—He, who died, and rose from the dead, in order to convince *man*, that he should rise also—He, who derives his exaltation from the gift of the Almighty, as the reward of his obedience—This being, however exalted and glorious he may be, as a Messenger, a Redeemer, a Mediator, an Intercessor, or a Judge of mankind—whatever dignity he may possess in these respects, his power, being all derived from God, he acting only as the agent and instrument of God, and shining only by the reflected light of God—This being, under such circumstances, cannot be equal, but must be, forever, inferior to God.

We have now, as we believe, proved, from the sacred Scriptures, our three propositions :—First, that there is one, and only one God, the Father ; secondly, that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from the Father ; and, thirdly, that he is inferior to him. It follows, from this demonstration, that Jesus Christ cannot be God.

Fourthly.—We are to answer some objections to the Unitarian views of the subject.

I.—It is affirmed that Christ is, sometimes, called *God*, in the Scriptures, as well as *man*, and that he possessed two natures—that he was "perfect God and perfect man, in two distinct natures, but one person forever." Hence it is inferred that when Christ is said to be sent by the Father—to receive a commandment from the Father what he should say and speak—when he is said to come *from* the Father, to return *to* the Father, to pray to the Father, to deliver up the kingdom to God, to be subject to God—when it is said that all power is given him *by* the Father, and that he came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him—when he is said to be ignorant of what the Father knows, and to be incompetent to accomplish what the Father executes—when these and other things, which denote the inferiority of the Son to the Father, are affirmed of Christ, they are said, by Trinitarians, to be affirmed of him *only* in his human nature.

This doctrine of the two natures of Christ was "ascertained and settled" by the council of Chalcedon, an assembly of Roman Catholic divines, in the fifth century, and affords a very convenient method of solving the difficulties which are presented to Trinitarians by such passages of Scripture as expressly declare Christ's inferiority, but we are persuaded that its convenience is greater than its truth, that it is no where to be found in the sacred volume, and that, if denied, it cannot be proved. We say it cannot be true for the following reasons :

First. Other persons, besides Christ, who stand in the same relation to God and mankind, with Christ, are called

God, who do not and cannot possess a divine nature. If the appellation of *God*, which is applied to Christ, prove, therefore, that he actually is God, the same appellation, being given to other prophets and messengers of God, proves, that each of those prophets and messengers is God. The inference is unavoidable.

It is a well known fact, that the prophets and messengers of the divine will to mankind are often called *Gods* in the sacred Scriptures, and, in some instances, are so denominated even by the Supreme Being. The Saviour says, John x. 35, If he called those *Gods*, to whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken, &c. Christ received the name of Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is *God with us*, or *God be with us*. Lemuel, being interpreted, is *God with them*. Elijah, interpreted, is *God the Lord*. Joshua, *the Lord is Salvation*. Ishmael, *God that hears*.—Tabeal, *good God*. Eliphalet, *God of deliverance*. Elishama, *God hearing*. Elisha, *God that gives help*. Moses, likewise, is called *God* in Ex. vii. 1. I (Jehovah) have made thee a *God* to Pharaoh. Now why do Moses, Elijah, Joshua, and other prophets, receive the name of *God*? Is it because each of them in his nature and essence, actually *is* God?—Will any one presume to affirm so preposterous an idea?—Could any thing tend more directly to polytheism and idolatry? The thing cannot be admitted for a moment. What, then, are we to infer from this application of the word *God* to any individuals of mankind? Most unquestionably, that they were the agents of God, the prophets of God, the messengers of God, that they were commissioned *by* God, acted by divine authority in all they did, and were to the human race *as* God. Thus Moses, who performed miracles in the sight of Pharaoh in Egypt, was called a *God to Pharaoh*, and Elisha, who was empowered to raise from the dead the widow's son, was, in a certain sense, as his name indicates, the *God that gives help*. In the same manner Jesus Christ, who was authorized to establish, in a miraculous and supernatural way, the divine character of his religion, was properly

called Immanuel, *God with us.* In the miracles performed, from time to time, by these distinguished individuals, we see God himself acting, and shewing forth the most wonderful power by human instruments. An individual, therefore, even a man, may receive the appellation of *God*, from the nature of his office, or of his commission, without being actually God himself. We ought by no means to deify him on this account. If we do so, can we any longer lay claim to the name of Christians in the truest and most scriptural sense of the phrase? Has not St. Paul, by the strong negative he has placed upon this question, put the matter entirely at rest? "Though there be," says he, "that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be Gods many and Lords many,) yet to us (i. e. to us Christians) there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things." 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

Secondly. This doctrine cannot be true, because if it were true, there would be more Gods than one.

The authority of the sacred Scriptures, which as we have already seen, explicitly declare that there is only one God, the Father, and that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from the Father, and inferior to him, must first be overthrown, before this doctrine can be established. If Jesus Christ be a distinct being from God, the Father, and yet equal to him, how is it possible to avoid the conclusion, that there are two co-equal Gods? If he be not a distinct being from the Father, how can he be said to be equal to the Father in every divine perfection? Can a being, who is immutably one and the same being, be said to be equal to himself, or to be unequal to himself? Can any being be a son to himself, be sent by himself, receive power from himself, go to himself, deliver up a kingdom to himself, and sit at his own right hand? If Christ is not a distinct person from the Father, how is it possible that there should be "three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in power and glory?" Is there no distinction between one person and another person, between one agent and another agent? We object to the

doctrine of the two natures, because, if it were true, there would be more Gods than one.

Thirdly. The doctrine of two natures in one and the same being, is not true, because it implies a contradiction in terms. If there are two natures, there are two beings, and two beings cannot be one and the same being. God is a being totally different in his nature and character from man. God is infinite. Man is finite. God is omniscient. Man is not omniscient. Between beings whose nature is so dissimilar, there never can be any thing like a strict numerical unity. "We do not know," says Professor Norton, "what there is which is clear in language, or what proposition of any sort can be affirmed to be true if this is not true—that it is impossible that the same being should be finite and infinite; or, in other words, that it is impossible that the same being should be man and God. To express our own view on the subject, we must say, that if the language we are considering were not so familiar, we believe there is scarcely any one who would not revolt from the doctrine, as shocking every proper feeling of reverence towards God, and who would not, at the same time, regard it as being as mere an absurdity as can be presented to the understanding."

Fourthly. The doctrine of the two natures cannot be true, because it is no where to be found in the Scriptures, but rests entirely on human authority. Now the Scriptures were designed as an universal rule for mankind, and are of course, adapted to the capacities of all; but we have examined them with critical attention, and, we think, without any improper biases; and we no where find this strange doctrine of two natures in one being asserted, either by our Saviour himself, or by any one of the inspired penmen. Like the doctrine of the Trinity, it is taught in no part of the sacred volume, but rests entirely on deductions and inferences. If it had been a cardinal doctrine of the Bible, would it not have been expressed in plain and intelligible language? Should we, in no instance, have found our Saviour, or his apostles, making allusion to this mysterious doctrine, and elucidating

it in their writings or discourses ? Should we never hear our Saviour making the remark, 'this I do in my divine nature,' and 'this I do in my human nature, and not in my divine nature,' had he actually possessed two natures, had he, in reality been, as is imagined, both God and man, finite and infinite ? Would it have been of no importance to mankind to be assured, when Jesus spake to them as the infinite God, and when he addressed them only as a finite being ? How were they to know when his instructions were divine, and when they were not so? How were they to separate, in his discourses, what was essential to their happiness and salvation from what had no important bearing upon them ? Say not that the doctrine is mysterious and incomprehensible, and that we are, therefore, not to look for a solution of the difficulties that embarrass it. Had Christ possessed the two natures that are attributed to him, we are persuaded that he would not have left mankind in the dark, with regard to so important a fact, but would have stated it explicitly, and without ambiguity.— Whenever he spoke, as God, he would have announced it to them. Whenever he spoke, as man, he would not have left them to infer it, but would have told them, plainly, that he did so. As we find nothing of this in the Scriptures, we conclude that the doctrine which inculcates two natures in Christ is a human invention merely, and has no divine authority upon which to rest.

Fifthly. This doctrine cannot be true, because, if it were true, it would prove that Christ was guilty of deception.— In Mark xiii. 32., speaking, as is supposed by some, of the day of judgment, Christ says, But of that day, and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels that are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father. Trinitarians commenting upon this passage, will say, that Christ, in his human nature, was ignorant of the day, but that, as God, in his divine nature, he knew it perfectly well. "As if a person should close one of his eyes, and look at an object with the eye that was open, and should then affirm, that he did not see the object, meaning, that he did not see it with the eye that was closed,

when he saw it clearly with the eye that was open." Should we not justly accuse such a person of deceit and imposition? Is it probable, is it possible, that our Saviour would, in the same manner, have declared his ignorance of a future event, meaning that he was ignorant of it as man, while, at the same time, he knew it, and could not but know it, perfectly well, as a divine and omniscient being? It is not possible. With our views of the subject, it is presumption, it is impiety to suppose it. This doctrine cannot be true in any sense. It is out of our power to account for its existence among intelligent persons upon any other ground than that furnished by the strong, and almost invincible prejudices of early education.

II. It is affirmed that the doctrine of the Trinity, though revealed, is mysterious, and Unitarians, in rejecting it, are charged with an attempt to exalt reason above revelation.

This charge is made against Unitarians in a pointed and especial manner, but we believe, on a strict examination of its bearing, it will be found to effect, more seriously than is often imagined, the character of revelation in general—that it lessens, inconceivably, its intrinsic value, counteracts, in a great measure, its otherwise beneficent effects, fosters a captious, satirical, sceptical spirit in society, and has prevented, and does still continue to prevent, to an alarming degree, the extension and propagation of Christianity in the world. No one cause, we are persuaded—and we say it, not in a spirit of recrimination, but of unaffected sorrow and painful regret—no one cause, we are well persuaded, has ever contributed more towards producing infidelity with respect to the Christian religion, than the efforts that have been made by priests and learned men, in every age, to represent its doctrines as awfully mysterious and incomprehensible by human reason. Many persons have imagined, that it would be a reflection on the character of an infinitely wise being to adapt the discoveries of his infinite mind to the weak capacities of finite creatures, or to make revelations of himself, of his providence and his purposes, that were

capable of being completely fathomed and understood. In their view, whenever God speaks, his words convey some secret and hidden meaning, some dark and mysterious design, or providence. Truth is always shrouded in obscurity, and veiled in shadows, and all its problems are to be solved by faith and conjecture, not by reasoning and argument. Spiritual conceptions are always vague, confused, and indeterminate, and religion itself is a matter quite incomprehensible by all but "the elect." They endeavour, therefore, to find in the Scriptures strange and wonderful doctrines, far above human comprehension, and perplex the mind with various sublime and inexplicable mysteries which they suppose revelation inculcates. Mystery, in their apprehension, constitutes the glory and excellence of the gospel, and clear and plain truths, that involve no difficulty, are, at once, rejected, as the base offspring of human reason. In the creeds of most churches, not an article can be named that does not partake more, or less, of the mysterious character. Most of the solemn councils that we read of in history were convoked, from time to time, for no other purpose than to settle disputes that had arisen respecting the "mysteries" of religion.—The members of the "church militant" are supposed to be well grounded in these incomprehensible doctrines, and all who deny them have been denounced as heretics, and excluded from Christian fellowship and communion. None, indeed, are considered to be in a state fit for salvation and future happiness, who cannot detail to the satisfaction of the initiated the history of some mysterious operation of which they have been the subjects, and whose faith does not partake largely of the hidden, the intricate and the marvellous.—Thus Christianity, for what reasons we shall not pretend to say, has been represented as a most wonderful, extravagant and inexplicable system, and as one calculated to amaze and terrify, and, perhaps, to subdue the minds of its converts, but not to enlighten, or convince them. And with such claims, if we believe the assertions of a large portion of its advocates, it comes forth, challenging for itself the faith and acquiescence of the world.

In answer to the objection, which is made to our views, founded on the mysterious character of revelation, we reply therefore,

First,—That the value of divine revelation is not enhanced, but diminished, by the obscure and mysterious character attributed to it. Those truths are, certainly, the most useful, which are delivered in the most luminous and intelligible manner. However sublime and overwhelming any alleged mysteries may be in themselves, and however implicit an acquiescence in them may be required of those to whom they are addressed, it will be difficult to point out any advantages that can possibly result from the belief of them. As they are acknowledged to be perfectly unintelligible, and inexplicable, they can be no acquisition to the province of knowledge. A man may study them all his life and never be the wiser for his diligence. As they serve only to perplex, worry, and embarrass the mind, they can with little reason be said to increase the sum, or extend the sphere of human happiness. Upon the whole, therefore, they render divine revelation less valuable, and contribute less to its reputation than do those important, practical truths, which we believe it always inculcates in a clear and perspicuous manner.

Secondly.—Taking it for granted that the Supreme Being possesses the attributes which are usually ascribed to him, we say it is not *probable* that a revelation from such a being would contain any mysteries. It certainly must be considered a reflection both upon the wisdom and the power of almighty God to suppose that he has revealed truths for the benefit of mankind, and yet has shrouded them in so much obscurity, that they cannot, with all their efforts, understand them. This would not seem to be the part of a good or a wise Sovereign, for if our understandings were found insufficient to unravel very difficult things, it would be the object of such a being to remove all obstacles in the path of truth by making his discoveries plainer and more evident, and not to perplex the mind by involving them more and more in the dark.

Thirdly.—Supposing revelation actually means what the term indicates, viz. the discovery of truths which were before either partially or entirely unknown, it is *impossible*, strictly speaking, that divine revelation should contain any mysteries. As soon as a proposition is revealed, it ceases to be a mystery. The spirit of God has solved the problem. Human wit and human zeal may disguise its beauty in a thousand ways, and decorate it with foreign ornaments, and obscure its lustre by false shades, but, for all their impotent efforts, they will only gain the credit of a presumptuous act, in attempting to make that appear dark and mysterious which God has made clear.

Notwithstanding these weighty objections to an implicit faith in mysteries, it is still affirmed, that we ought not to reject the doctrine of the Trinity, and other wonderful propositions, on account of their mysterious and unintelligible character, and the reason that is assigned why we should not reject them is this—that we every moment admit, as objects of faith, mysteries that are as great and inexplicable as that is. The late Dr. Dwight, writing on this subject, says, "all men admit, and if they believe any thing, must, every moment, admit mysteries, as the objects of their faith." We entertain a profound respect for the memory and the talents of the distinguished theologian who made this declaration; but a mysterious proposition, let it be remembered, is an unintelligible proposition, and to say, that "all men every moment admit" unintelligible propositions "as the objects of their faith," is a bold, gratuitous assumption, and one too, that is entirely indefensible. He goes on to support it, however, by certain analogies drawn from the material world, though it will be seen, in the sequel, that instead of establishing the point with which he started, that "all men, every moment, admit mysteries as the objects of their faith," he does no more than inform us of what every body knew before, and what no person ever presumed to deny, viz. *that there actually are such things as mysteries existing.* "This world," he says, "is made up of atoms. What are they? They are defined *solid extended somethings.* What is the something thus

solid and extended? Here our inquiries are stopped, and an atom is found to be an absolute mystery." Again: "The world is made up of atoms. What binds them together so as to constitute a world? Attraction. What is attraction? To this there is no answer. The world then, on which we tread, in which we live, and about which we think we have extensive knowledge, is wholly formed out of particles, absolutely mysterious, bound together by a power equally mysterious."

Bear in mind, my Christian friends, that the object of the writer was to prove, that all men admit mysteries as objects of faith, and then ask yourselves, if this be not strange logic. Coming from a man of erudition and research, it appears doubly surprising. Does it appear to you from the examples adduced, that we admit any mysteries as the objects of our faith? Do we admit any in the case of the *atoms*? None, as we perceive. What the atoms are, or how they ought to be defined, is not an object of faith. If the mystery consist in this, very well. No person will pretend to say that we believe any thing about this part of the subject. The fact however, that atoms exist, is an object of faith, and we assent to it without hesitation. Thus far we extend our belief with regard to the atoms. But is there any mystery in this? Surely no mystery. Nothing can be more plain than that atoms exist. If the fact be denied, we can prove it, and give philosophical, and even ocular demonstration of it. It appears, then, that as far as our faith is extended to the atoms, we believe in no mystery, but only in facts that are clear and plain as the light of day.

Is there any mystery, that we believe, in the case of the *attraction of atoms*? We think there is none. What attraction is, and how it should be defined, have been subjects of dispute among philosophers, and are points that are not yet well settled. Now an unintelligible definition, and an unsettled point in philosophy may perhaps be reckoned among what are called *mysteries*. But will any one pretend to say that we believe these mysteries? Certainly no person will

forget himself so far as to make such an assertion. What, then, do we believe with regard to attraction? We believe the fact, that the particles, or atoms, of which the world is formed, are bound together by attraction. But in this there is no mystery. The fact is a proper object of faith, and every thing connected with it is so clear and intelligible, that it cannot be misunderstood. Thus far we perceive that the assertion, that all men, every moment, do, and must admit mysteries as the objects of their faith, is utterly unsupported.

Our entire ignorance of the manner in which God exists—how the soul and body are united—how plants grow—how the miracles of Christ were performed, and of other mysterious matters, is adduced to show, that we do and must believe in mysteries, but with as little reason as the case of the *attraction of atoms*. In all these instances the error of supposing that we believe something mysterious, arises from the circumstance that we are not careful to distinguish between the *modus operandi*, or *manner of operation of causes*, and the *effects produced*. To the former we never extend the assent of our faith. To the latter we uniformly do. *God exists.* This proposition may be proved both from reason and scripture, and we believe it on the strength of the evidence adduced in its support. *How God exists*, the *manner* of his existence, is not an object of faith. *The plants grow.* This may be proved to the entire satisfaction of any one who doubts it, by actual measurement at successive intervals of time. The *manner* in which they grow is not, however, an object of faith. By making similar distinctions in the other instances we shall discover that we believe nothing that is mysterious about them, but only what is perfectly clear to the understanding.

Before it be asserted that Unitarians, in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, attempt to exalt reason above revelation, it must be fairly shown, that revelation actually contains that doctrine. This, we are constrained to say has never yet been done. With all the ingenuity, and learning and eloquence displayed, for ages upon ages, in its defence, we

do not perceive that its advocates advance one inch in establishing its divine authority. Until this shall be done—until the doctrine comes invested with all the claims of heavenly inspiration, the solemn charge preferred against us, that we dishonour the revealed will of God by giving a preference to the dubious deductions of human reason, must be considered altogether gratuitous and unmeaning.

III. It has been asserted, if we mistake not, that Cerinthus, in the first, and Arius, in the fourth, century, made an attack upon the doctrine of the Trinity. Hence it is inferred, that the doctrine in question existed in the church antecedently to the attack, and was considered a fundamental article of faith by the first Christians. In answer to this objection we affirm,

In the *first place*,—That the doctrine did not exist in the church, as an article of faith, till the fourth century, and we venture to say it upon the authority of the learned Mosheim, almost the only ecclesiastical historian who has given us a faithful account of the doctrine and practice of the first Christians, and from whose impartiality it detracts nothing that he was a Trinitarian. Vol. 1, p. 100, he says, "In the first century whoever acknowledged Christ, as the Saviour of mankind, and made a solemn profession of his confidence in him, was immediately baptized and received into the church. Page 411, he says, "Soon after the commencement of this (the fourth) century, in the year 317, a *new* contention arose, the subject of which was the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead, a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, *had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches*, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas." Thus it appears that it was not a doctrine of the church till the fourth century, and Cerinthus could not make an attack upon a doctrine which did not exist.

Secondly.—The doctrine of the Trinity is not contained in the "Apostles creed," which has been received in the church since the year 150, and which would certainly have mentioned this doctrine, had it been a true doctrine of the scriptures.

Thirdly.—Because an attack is made upon a doctrine, it does not prove that the doctrine upon which the attack is made is true. Martin Luther, a native of Isleben in Saxony, in the sixteenth century made an attack upon the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. From this it does not, however, appear, that the Pope was actually infallible.

Let it not be imagined that Unitarianism is a new religion that has just sprung into existence. No, the farthest possible from such a supposition is the fact. We believe it, on the contrary, to have been the pure and simple doctrine of the primeval age, and trace out its commencement to the remotest known point of antiquity. It was the single voice of the one God that Adam heard in the garden after the commission of his first offence. It was the same voice that dictated the ten commandments of the moral law to Moses, amidst the thunders of Sinai, and the prostration of the astonished multitude, and which claimed at that time for the being who uttered it, undisputed and unrivalled homage, annexing penalties the most awful to a wilful violation of the great command. It was the same voice that spoke from time to time in the inspirations of the prophets, who delivered the messages of the divine will. Every thing, in the early history of the world, that connected man with his Maker, bears upon it the simple and grand impression of the divine Unity. The Jews, as far as regards this great doctrine, have always been Unitarians. Were they not favoured with the immediate communications of God? How happens it that in all their sacred Scriptures, which we receive equally with them, as inspired writings, we find no intimation of the existence of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and no ascriptions of praise to such a mysterious combination of beings? How happens it that the beautiful idea of the absolute unity of the great Creator beams forth with a divine force and splendour from almost every sentence of their holy canon? Is it possible that their inspired writers were labouring under a mistake, for so many ages, respecting this very important subject? Was their opposition to Jesus Christ, in after times, founded upon his

denial of the unity of God, and his efforts to inculcate the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the divine nature? Far from it. We find, on the contrary, that he received their unqualified approbation for his sentiments on this subject.—To the question of the Hebrew lawyer, Which was the great commandment of the law?—he replied, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord." And what did the disciple of Moses say to this? Did he bring a charge against Christ for denying the Scriptures, because he had not asserted the doctrine of the trinity, or maintained a sort of "three-fold distinction" in the divine nature? How did he answer him? "Well, Master, *thou hast said the truth*, for there is one God, and there is none other but him." This was the doctrine of his countrymen, and he could not object to Christianity on this account. Did our Saviour, then, recal his original position—or alter or qualify it, in order that it might harmonize better with the sublime metaphysical "triad of Plato," or the still more refined and mysterious "distinctions" of later periods? No—not a word by way of retracting what he had said—not a word in the way of explanation. The statement he had made was unalterably true, and he did not wish to change it;—but, turning to this able expounder of the law, the last messenger of the divine will to mankind, addressed to him these emphatic words: "Thou,"—thou believer in the simple unity of God, the God of Moses and the Prophets—"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God!" With regard to this important doctrine, then, the statements of Jesus Christ harmonized perfectly with those of the ancient prophets, and the opinions of the Jews at the time of his appearance. In no boasting spirit, we may say that this single circumstance,—the agreement of the two dispensations, the old and the new, in this particular point, firmly establishes the most important doctrine of Unitarianism, and gives it a complete and splendid triumph over all the contrary systems and mysterious theories invented in these latter ages by the wit and ingenuity of man.

And why do the descendants of Abraham deny the divinity of our Scriptures? Has it not always been a subject of complaint with enlightened Jews that Christianity inculcated mysterious and incomprehensible doctrines, and that they were called upon to give their assent to opinions that they could not understand? Are they not ardently devoted to the great doctrine of one God? Is it not one of their strongest objections to Christianity that it advocates a contrary opinion, by representing this one God as existing in three persons who are equal to each other in sovereignty, power and glory? Every one knows that this was the point upon which the celebrated David Levi dwelt so much in his controversy with Dr. Priestley, and which he considered one of the greatest obstacles that were presented to the propagation of Christianity among his countrymen. They have derived their opinion of the doctrines contained in our holy religion not from the New Testament, but from the results of Synods and ecclesiastical Councils, from Catechisms framed by General Assemblies of divines, and from the creeds of particular churches. Convince them that they have been labouring under a serious mistake touching this matter—convince them that Christianity contains no such doctrines as they have supposed it to contain, but that on the other hand, it asserts, with as much clearness, and consistency as their own Scriptures, the great and important doctrine of one, and only one, supreme God—convince them of this, and you will do much towards removing the hindrances that are in the way of their readily embracing the Christian faith—you will do much towards pulling down the middle wall of partition that separates them from us, and will open a fairer field, than has ever yet been trodden, where Jews and Christians may meet together on even ground, and cordially embrace each other as brethren of the same united family, as members of the same common household, and as heirs of the same heavenly inheritance.

Would it be difficult to convince them that such is actually the fact, and that the Christian Scriptures perfectly harmonize with their own in this respect? We think not. We

believe that no unprejudiced person, whatever his faith may be, who opens the New Testament, and studies it with critical attention, can possibly arrive at any other conclusion than that of the strict, simple, undivided unity of God. We cannot think that he would ever be led to imagine from any expressions that he finds in that volume, that the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, is not, strictly speaking, one being, but three—or that he would rise up from such an examination convinced that the inspired prophets, and the worthies of ancient times, were all along misled in their opinions of this matter. He will discover not only that the four Evangelists, who give a particular account of the discourses, miracles and whole history of Christ, but also that the other Apostles, who were sent forth to disseminate the Christian religion, were entirely Unitarian in the doctrines they inculcated. In the book entitled the "Acts of the Apostles," we do not find a word of their ever having enforced the mysterious doctrine of the trinity in any of the countries that they visited, but they every where express their firm and unwavering faith in the one God, and in Jesus Christ as an inferior, and a created being. For the three first centuries we have very satisfactory proof that the great mass of Christians were Unitarian, and that it was not till the fourth century, when the opinions of Platonism began to be in vogue, and when an amalgamation of the systems was hailed as an event auspicious to the progress of Christianity, that the doctrine of the Trinity was ever thought of by the Christian believer. It was then foisted into the system, but with what a tottering hold it has maintained its place there, we need not say. The records of ecclesiastical history shew, that it has always met, from the very first, with a most powerful and honest opposition, and that there always have been men, who, in the strength of an upright conscience, have declared and maintained, that it is altogether a human invention, and that no such doctrine is to be discovered in any part of the sacred Scriptures. Unitarianism, therefore, in its most important feature, has a higher antiquity than any system of religious faith with which we

are acquainted, stretching back nearly twenty centuries to the introduction of Christianity, and receding thence, to gather its ancient honours, even to the earliest records of the creation of the world, and of the history of man.

In the course of this discourse we have, my Christian friends, proved, as we think, beyond a doubt, from the sacred Scriptures, the great doctrine of the absolute unity, and unrivalled supremacy of God the Father—that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from the Father, and inferior to him, and that he cannot therefore be God, in the strict sense of the word. We have adduced arguments, and collected facts, from the inspired writings, from reason, and ecclesiastical history, sufficient, we trust, to satisfy the most wavering mind, and to silence the most determined opposition—arguments which go to prove, that what has been called "the doctrine of the two natures," is, if true, a dangerous doctrine, and subversive not only of the first principles of revealed religion, but even of the divine authority of revelation itself;—that it literally deifies inferior beings, even men;—that it thus directly tends to polytheism and idolatry;—that it implies a contradiction in terms;—that it is no where to be found in the sacred Scriptures, but rests entirely on human authority for its support, and that it forces us to believe, what we can never permit ourselves, for a moment, even to imagine—that the Saviour of the world was guilty of deceit and imposition in the statements that he made. We have also, as we think, made it clearly to appear, that the efforts which are made by some to uphold the doctrine of the Trinity, and other doctrines of a similar complexion, by challenging for them a mysterious character, contribute to render divine revelation less respectable in the eyes of the world, and to lessen inconceivably its intrinsic value;—that, if the supreme Being possess the attributes usually attributed to him, it is *improbable*, and, if *revelation* actually mean what the term indicates, that it is, strictly speaking, *impossible* it should contain any mysteries. We have also shewn that the attempts of those are equally unfortunate who endeavour to

support the Trinity, and other mysterious doctrines, by analogies drawn from the material, the animal and the vegetable worlds;—that mistake in all these cases arises, from not separating what is mysterious in them from what is intelligible, and from supposing that we give the assent of our faith to the former, when we do, and can only extend it to the latter. We have, moreover, traced out the origin of the doctrine for which we contend, the doctrine of the simple unity of God, to the remotest known point of antiquity; we have shewn that there never has been a time when this doctrine has not been supported and revered by a host of able and pious advocates;—that it was always held sacred by that ancient people of God, the Israelites; that among idolatrous nations, though often tempted, they were never induced to abandon it; that it was inculcated, in the most strenuous terms, by Jesus Christ and his Apostles; and, finally, that ever since the establishment of Christianity, it has been embraced as a fundamental article of faith, and been considered as the foundation of all true religion. These facts we believe, we have fully established; and why have we endeavoured to establish them? The reason we assigned at the outset of the argument, and it was this:—that while all Christians professed to believe (and sincerely we doubted not) the doctrine of the divine Unity, we were startled and pained by the reflection, that there were many in this Christian country, who held to another doctrine, in our opinion, utterly inconsistent with that profession—the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It was, therefore, that we went back to first principles; it was, therefore, that we examined the sacred volume with minute and critical attention, and that we adduced from that unquestioned source such an array of argument and such a force of demonstration as our opportunities and abilities permitted; it was, therefore, that we appealed to reason to reconcile any apparent inconsistencies; it was, therefore, that we sought out the testimony of the learned, and appealed to the records of ecclesiastical history; it was,

therefore, that we set forth the fundamental article of our faith invested with its authority, and fortified with its strength and beaming forth in its attractions, and presenting its commanding claims to the high and solemn notice, to the prompt and cordial acquiescence of all intelligent beings.

And now lest any should be led to imagine that we wish to undervalue the character of the Saviour, and to deprive him of the honour and dignity which justly belong to him, we shall explicitly state in what light we think ourselves bound by Christianity to consider him. While then we do not believe him to be the supreme God, but an inferior and created being, we do most certainly regard him as the Messiah, or Son of God, whose advent was predicted by the ancient prophets, and consider a practical faith in him, as such, the fundamental article of our religion. We consider him the only Mediator between God and man, as the only organ of communication by whom, through whom, and in whose name all our prayers and supplications are to be offered to the Father. We regard him as the Saviour, the Redeemer of mankind, who was sent into this world to instruct us in our duty, to deliver us from a state of doubt and apprehension, "to put away sin," and its miserable consequences, "to purify unto himself a peculiar people who should be zealous of good works." We believe that by, and through, his instrumentality, "we have received the atonement," or method of reconciliation with God, the Father, the benefits of this atonement being experienced by those alone who practise the precepts, receive the truths and imitate the example of Jesus; that his death upon the cross, the seal of his ministry, the highest proof of his disinterested attachment to mankind, the great event which was efficacious in bringing life and immortality to light, was also, in many respects, one of the most important means by which that method of reconcilement is effected and the wandering children of God brought home to their Father's house, and rendered penitent and grateful. We believe that he is invested with the office of an intercessor in heaven because he is the friend of mankind, and that he there inter-

cedes with God for the pardon of our sins upon repentance, not that he may render the Supreme Being merciful and propitious, but because *He is so.* We believe that he " is head over all things to the church," that all orders and ranks, all dignities and privileges, all ' principalities,' ' powers,' and ' dominions,' pertaining to the ' church triumphant' in heaven, celestial and invisible, and to the ' church militant' on earth, whose history is subject to our own inspection—that all these things were originally appointed, or ' created,' by him, and for him, and, through his instrumentality, still ' consist,' or are held together by a consistent, regular, harmonious plan of subordination and discipline. We believe that ' God hath appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness,' and having ' committed all judgment to the Son,' that Christ will on that occasion judge the world ; that he will pass a righteous sentence on every individual, condemning the wicked, and awarding to the virtuous, the holy and the just, the felicities of heaven, and the rewards of everlasting life. All this we believe—all this we are persuaded that the Scriptures unequivocally assert—for all this we are grateful—for this last, this best, this unspeakable gift, the gift of a Saviour, O may we never cease to bless the Father of mercies, while we have a mind to conceive, a heart to feel, or a tongue to utter ! From the heavenly mildness of his temper, from the uniform prudence of his holy life, from the benignity of his engaging manners ; from the gentleness of his persuasive language ; from his unwearied career of beneficence ; from his readiness to relieve distress and assuage sorrow ; from his unaffected piety, and the humble resignation of his soul to the divine appointment ; from his ardent and unceasing devotion to his Father's pleasure ; from his respect and obedience to the laws and constituted authorities of his country ; from the exemplary patience with which he suffered persecution ; from the dignified composure with which he submitted to the insults of his enemies ; from the perseverance with which he vindicated the holy cause which he had espoused, to the very last, even at the expense of his

precious life ; from all these heavenly features in the character of the blessed Redeemer, O let us borrow a model from which to mould the temper of our hearts, to form the character of our lives, to regulate the tenor of our actions, through all the vicissitudes of this changing world, in prosperity and adversity ; in sickness and in health ; in success and disappointment ; in the closet and in the temple ; in the family and in the world ; in the hour of retirement, and in the bustle and perplexity of our active duties ; in life, and, if need be, even in death. But while as members of his church and subjects of his kingdom, we venerate him as our spiritual ruler, and bow before him as our spiritual king, we are bound to remember that even that ruler has a Chief, and that king a Sovereign, and that the time is coming when Christ shall deliver up his kingdom to God even the Father, and be subject unto him. While we behold him elevated above all earthly potentates and princes, while we see him preferred before all prophets and messengers ; while we view him extending the sceptre of his ecclesiastical dominion over living myriads, and departed tens of millions who have gone before us to the invisible world ; while we regard him as shining forth with ineffable splendour, invested with those high and various offices in which alone he is 'all in all' to us, we are bound to remember that that elevation, that preference, that dominion and those offices were received by him from a higher Power, to whom he is subordinate, and who permitted him to enjoy and sustain them as the reward of his obedience unto death. As our Messiah, let us believe in him, and expect no other ; as our Saviour, let us practise his precepts, forsaking our sins, and renouncing our errors ; as our Mediator, let us approach the Father through him alone ; as our Intercessor, let us regard him as our friend, and display our gratitude by imitating him in the same capacity, among men ; as the Captain of our salvation, let us wear his shield and follow his footsteps ; as our great exemplar, let us imitate him ; as our Benefactor, who lived to serve us and who died to save

us, and who, in the extremity of his anguish upon the cross, prayed for his persecuting foes and his guilty murderers, let us love him with intense affection, and a ceaseless devotedness to his pleasure; at the remembrance of his name, let the tears of gratitude flow, let the hymn of praise be chaunted, let every spark of resentment at the follies, the passions, the ill usage of mankind, die away within us, and our whole souls be subdued into a quiet spirit of forgiveness, resignation and humility; as our Judge, let us anticipate from him an impartial, an indulgent sentence, considering that he was tempted in all respects like as we are, and that he will not at last, forget our frame, or cease to remember that we are dust; thus let us imitate, venerate and love him.—But while we do so, let it never escape our solemn recollection, and our practical observance, that there are even loftier claims than his, and that with all his amiable, venerable characteristics, and attractive virtues, with all his various, dignified and interesting offices, we are not to regard him as our God—but are bound to reserve our deeper homage, our profounder reverence, our higher ascriptions of praise, our more unlimited love, for that 'holy One who inhabiteth eternity and filleth immensity with his presence,' the blessed and only Potentate, the only absolute Lord, Creator, Preserver, Governor, consoling and illuminating Spirit, the sole Arbiter of all events, present and future, the essential Dispenser of light, life, comfort and happiness to all his creatures, the Being 'who doeth his will in the armies of heaven above, and among the inhabitants of the earth below,' whose almighty power none can resist; the justice and mercy of whose dispensations none can dispute; 'who sitteth on the circle of the heavens,' and in whose sight the nations of the earth are accounted as drops of water or particles of dust; who bringeth the princes of the earth to nothing; before whom kings bow, and archangels veil their faces; at whose command crowns fall, thrones moulder, kingdoms totter to their centre, and wide-spread empires are planted and overthrown; before whose all-controlling universal dominion, all power is nerveless, and even the

splendid dynasty and extensive rule of Jesus is finally to be surrendered up ; the universal Spirit in whom we live and move and have our being ; from whom we derive all that we have and all that we hope for ; who hath created us social, rational and immortal beings ; who hath given us friends, relatives and protectors ; who hath scattered around us all those displays of gracefulness and grandeur which delight the eye, engage the attention and charm the heart of man in the beauteous frame of nature ; who desireth nothing so much as to render us happy ; who therefore sent, from time to time, prophets and messengers, and finally his well beloved Son, the most distinguished being in his creation, to reveal more perfectly his will, to confirm the great doctrine of his Unity, to declare to us our duty, and open our way to everlasting life ; and who, notwithstanding his ineffable grandeur, and his infinite and amazing attributes, has been pleased to represent himself to us as our kind Father, our bountiful Benefactor, and our almighty Friend ; and as the proper object not only of our profoundest reverence, but also of our firmest reliance, our warmest gratitude, our most devoted allegiance, our most ardent love. This Being we worship as our God, because he himself has commanded us to do so ; this Being alone we dare to worship as our God, for he himself has declared that he 'will not give his glory to another ;' and whatever charity we may extend to the faith of those who elevate another being to the same rank, and invest him with the same honours, and claim for him the same homage, we solemnly say we dare not do it ; the command of God is upon us, and we cannot do it, no, we cannot do it.

And now we once more make an appeal to all candid persons ;—to those whose minds are perplexed by doubts or alarmed by fears ;—to those who devoutly think they believe what they cannot understand and explain ;—to those whom erroneous apprehensions of the truths of the Gospel have rendered careless and indifferent ;—even to the self-opinionated, who imagine that their own views, and their own views only, are infallibly correct ;—to all men, in fine, who

either entirely reject the truth, or who vindicate it in an inconsistent manner—in a manner calculated to awaken distrust, or repel belief—in a manner tending to encourage skepticism in its abuse, and to confirm infidelity in its errors. To all such persons we would, now, make a final appeal, and ask them, whether the doctrine of the unity and unrivalled supremacy of God the Father has not been firmly established by the arguments that have been presented for their consideration? Are such arguments and considerations to be turned aside as of no importance? Are they to be regarded with unfeeling apathy and cold indifference? Are they not to be considered with seriousness, and to be examined with impartiality? Does not the importance of the subject demand it? Let them review these arguments and ponder seriously upon their bearing, and if, after a careful investigation, they rise up, as we presume they will, thoroughly convinced of the correctness of our views, let them be influenced by no motives suggested by worldly interest; by no regard to the fleeting fashions of the day; by no considerations of what may be popular or unpopular with the majority of mankind; by no unjust attachment to former opinions; by no fear of reproach; by no dread of persecution, from maintaining, openly, what they conceive to be truth. Let them remember their own responsibility, let them judge for themselves, and not be guided, in so important a matter, by the opinions of others; let them be influenced only by the authority of the sacred Scriptures; by the unbiassed dictates of their own understandings and consciences; and by a high sense of the duty they owe to themselves as rational and immortal beings; and when well convinced of the correctness of their opinions, let them not fear to assert and maintain them as becomes MEN and CHRISTIANS in a FREE LAND.